

DOE News Release – Wildland fire update

Date: Thursday, July 19, 2007

Time: 1 p.m.

#8

SEVENTH FOLLOW-UP NEWS RELEASE FOR INL EMERGENCY

Wildland fire status at mid-day July 19 – Rangeland burn size estimate lowered to 4,800 acres

Following a helicopter flyover of the rangeland fire this morning, emergency response officials have lowered the estimate of acreage burned by the Twin Buttes fire on the southeastern edge of the Idaho National Laboratory Site.

Firefighters late this morning estimated the size of the burned area at 4,800 acres and growing. An earlier estimate last night, prior to the flyover, gauged the size as 9,500 acres. Roughly 10 percent of the fire has been contained.

No INL facilities are threatened by the fire as of mid-day Thursday.

The fire continues to move in a northeasterly direction, pushed by winds gusting from 15 to 25 mph.

At mid-day today, law enforcement again closed U.S. Highway 20 to traffic due to reduced visibility from smoke drifting over the highway. Firefighters plan to set another back burn fire to prevent the blaze from crossing U.S. Highway 20. Highway 20 may be intermittently closed throughout the day depending on the progression of the fire line.

The active fire line has moved onto U.S. Bureau of Land Management land adjacent to the southeastern boundaries of the INL Site. INL crews continue to assist with firefighting efforts.

Firefighters and heavy equipment crews from INL, the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the BLM are battling the fire. An investigation into the cause of the fire has begun.

The Materials and Fuels Complex on the desert Site is closed to day-shift workers. MFC is not expected to reopen today. Other INL Site facilities are operating on normal schedules today, however, employees should call the INL bus hotline toll-free at 1-877-424-4635 for a recorded message on current bus operations.

Most INL Site facilities will be closed on Friday as the majority of Site employees work 4 X 10 workweeks, Monday through Thursday.

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